

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----047146 280554Z /20
R 271102Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6236
INFO /AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 435

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 7930

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS, RO, XF, SHUM
SUBJ: ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL
REF: TEL AVIV 8275

1. EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO WRESTLE THE DIFFICULT AND UNANGELIC PROBLEM OF JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM ROMANIA TO ISRAEL ARE MUCH APPRECIATED HERE. AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE NUMBERS PICTURE, WE WOULD NOTE THAT ISRAELI AMBASSADOR CAHANA TOLD AMBASSADOR BARNES OCTOBER 24 THAT EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL SHOULD RUN AT ABOUT 200 PERSONS FOR OCTOBER. THIS IS SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE 190 WHO DEPARTED IN SEPTEMBER, WHICH IN TURN IS CONSIDERABLY ABOVE PREVIOUS MONTHS, BUT NOT YET ENOUGH TO PERMIT TOTAL EMIGRATION FOR 1977 TO REACH LAST YEAR'S LEVEL OF 2,000. ALON AND CAHANA THUS SEEM TO BE WORKING AGAINST APPROXIMATELY THE SAME FIGURES.

2. WE RECOGNIZE THE PARADOX INVOLVED IN OUR OWN SITUATION: WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE BODYCOUNTING DIS- PENSED WITH ALTOGETHER IN DEALING WITH THIS BASIC- ALLY HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM, BUT ALSO SUSPECT IT CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY DEALT WITH, ON A LONG-TERM BASIS, UNTIL GOI IS PREPARED TO ENGAGE GOR DIRECTLY AND
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MORE CONCRETELY THAN HERETOFORE, BY PRESENTING RE- PRESENTATION LISTS WHICH COULD SERVE AS SOME SORT OF BENCHMARK OF ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE FOR GOI, GOR AND U.S.

3. AS TEL AVIV IS AWARE, HOWEVER, THIS IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL PARADOXES. U.S. AND ISRAEL SHARE INTEREST

AND CONCERN OVER ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE ON JEWISH EMIGRATION, AS A MATTER OF POLICY AND HUMANITY IN BOTH CASES. BUT THE WEB OF COMMON INTEREST BECOMES VERY TANGLED IN PRACTICE:

-- AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, U.S. CONCERN CENTERS ON FREEDOM OF CHOICE TO LIVE, RESIDE AND TRAVEL AS THE INDIVIDUAL SEES FIT, WHILE ISRAEL'S CONCERN CENTERS ON FREEDOM FOR JEWS TO LIVE AS JEWS AND THUS, FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW, IS INSRAEL. THE OPERATIONAL EFFECT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS, HOWEVER, IS AN EXCHANGE OF THESE PRIORITIES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL. ISRAELI UNWILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE THE GOR PROBABLY MEANS THAT MORE ROMANIAN JEWS WILL STAY IN ROMANIA, AND COULD MEAN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JACKSON-VANIK LEVER ON ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE (IF THE LATTER IS INADQUATE TO ASSURE REAFFIRMATION OF MFN TREATMENT FOR ROMANIA DURING THE ANNUAL CONGRESS-IONAL REVIEW); WHILE U.S. CONCERN IS NOW FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THE SINGLE RIGHT OF EMIGRATION.

-- U.S. CONCERN IS MANDATED BY STATUTE, IN SECTION 402 OF THE TRADE ACT, WHILE ISRAELI CONCERN APPEARS INCREASINGLY TO BE A FUNCTION OF INTERNAL POLITICAL, AND EVEN PURELY BUREAUCRATIC, PULLING AND HAULING (REFTEL PARA 3).

-- GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF MFN AND IMPROVING ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE U.S. FOR ROMANIA, THE
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U.S.-ROMANIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IS IN AN IMPORTANT SENSE HELD HOSTAGE TO ISRAELI INTEREST OR INDIFFERENCE, AND WE ARE WITHOUT RECOURSE -- SINCE IT IS THE ADMINISTRATION RATHER THAN THE GOI WHICH MUST ASSESS ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE ON JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL -- SO LONG AS SOME TANGIBLE STANDARD OF ISRAELI SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION IS NOT AVAILABLE.

-- IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT BODYCOUNTING IS BOTH THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION.

4. ADMITTEDLY, THERE IS NO READY OR EASY AY TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THESE TANGLES. AT THE SAME TIME, TEL AVIV MAY WISH TO CONSIDER APPROPRIATENESS AND LIKELY EFFECTIVENESS OF FOLLOWING LINE OF ARGUMENTATION IN NEXT DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER (PARA 4 REFTTEL):

-- PRESENT SITUATION IS TO ISRAEL'S ADVANTAGE ON BOTH HUMANITARIAN AND LARGER POLICY GROUNDS. IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT U.S. HAS GREATER CLOUT (WHICH IT IS OBLIGED TO EXERCISE) IN STRUGGLE TO ENCOURAGE ROMANIANS TO MAINTAIN AND IF POSSIBLE IMPROVE PERFORMANCE ON JEWISH EMIGRATION, AND THERE IS GREAT

PLAUSIBILITY TO ISRAELI DESIRE TO AVOID BRUISING EFFORT (REFTEL) WHICH MIGHT EXPEND SCARCE POLICY AMMUNITION FOR WHAT ISRAELI APPARENTLY CONSIDERS RELATIVELY SMALL RETURNS. BY THE SAME TOKEN, HOWEVER, TO THE EXTENT THAT ISRAELI PASSIVITY RE ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE ENDANGERS MFN ANCHOR OF U.S.-ROMANIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP DURING CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW NEXT SUMMER, ISRAEL IS PUTTING THESE ADVANTAGES AT RISK.

-- TO THE EXTENT THAT ISRAELI UNWILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE THE ROMANIANS DIRECTLY AND CONCRETELY ON BEHALF OF ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION BECOMES APPARENT IN U.S. BODY POLITIC, THE POSSIBILITY ARISES THAT A GAP BETWEEN ISRAELI WORDS AND ISRAELI DEEDS MAY
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OPEN OUT, AND THAT THIS GAP WOULD ULTIMATELY DAMAGE ISRAELI CREDIBILITY WHERE IT COUNTS FOR A GREAT DEAL.

-- CONVERSELY, IF GOI IS INDEED SATISFIED (OR SATISFIED ENOUGH TO REFRAIN FROM ENTERING THE FRAY ITSELF) WITH ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE AT THE SOMEWHAT LOWER LEVELS LIABLE TO PERTAIN THIS YEAR, ISRAEL'S INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY MAKING THIS CLEAR IN THE U.S., OR CLEAR ENOUGH TO PERMIT RETENTION OF THE JACKSON-VANIK LEVER ON THE GOR.

5. FOR TEL AVIV: AMBASSADOR WILL BE DISCUSSING THESE ISSUES DURING CURRENT VISIT TO U.S. (FOR U.S.-ROMANIAN JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING), DURING WHICH HE HOPES TO SEE RABBI SCHINDLER TOO. UNFORTUNATELY HIS SCHEDULE WILL BE ESTREMELY TIGHT BETWEEN PLANNED RETURN TO BUCHAREST NOVEMBER 4 AND DEFINITIVE DEPARTURE MIDDAY NOVEMBER 7, SO THAT IT MAY NOT PROVE POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO MEET WITH ALON ON HIS LAST DAY, MUCH AS HE WOULD LIKE TO. DCM SIMONS IS HOWEVER BECOMING MORE FAMILIAR WITH ISSUES AS HIS OWN BREAKING-IN PERIOD APPROACHES SOME SORT OF CONCLUSION, AND TO EXTENT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN AMBASSADOR'S DEPARTURE SCEDULE PERMITS, AND IF ALON COULD FIND TIME IN HIS SCHEDULE, A STAB AT A MEETING MIGHT BE WROTH A TRY. THIS GOES IN SPADES FOR SUBSEQUENT VISIT BY AVNER: RABBI ROSEN IS CURRENTLY IN U.S., AND OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT HE SHOULD BE BACK WITHIN WEEKS. WE WILL CONFIRM. SIMONS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JEWS, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, IMMIGRANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BUCHAR07930
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770396-0316
Format: TEL
From: BUCHAREST
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771017/aaaaanwc.tel
Line Count: 165
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f4039126-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 TEL AVIV 8275
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 774949
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL
TAGS: SHUM, IS, RO, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f4039126-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009